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# OpenTBL Sun-setting: Questions, Concerns and Support

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# OpenTBL sun-setting: Questions and Support

## 1. What happened? Why?

Due to limited funding, Sixth Edge, the privately-owned company who developed OpenTBL, is no longer able to maintain or develop it. Over the last two years Sixth Edge partnered with several faculty at ISU and the Research Park in writing grants (USDA HEC and SBIR) to help support the development of OpenTBL, but these efforts were unsuccessful. CELT supports ThinkSpace but was not paying anything extra for OpenTBL. As a result, the development of OpenTBL was supported by Sixth Edge entirely on their own. This semester Sixth Edge determined that they could no longer sustain this. This was not a CELT decision.

## 2. Is ThinkSpace going away too?

No. ThinkSpace is still being supported by CELT who funds its hosting and support and will continue to remain online and available to ISU users at no cost. It contains many of the tools used in TBL such as peer evaluation and some types of application exercises in a blended environment.

## 3. When is OpenTBL going off line? Which date?

OpenTBL will be shut down on **May 12th**. A database backup of ISU-related data will be provided to ISU as part of the shutdown process.

## 4. What does it mean for my classes? How will this impact them?

If you have been conducting the iRATS, tRATS and Peer Evaluation for your classes in OpenTBL, you will no longer be able to do so after May 12. OpenTBL will not be available for usage in the Summer 2018 term and beyond.

## 5. What about my course data and design (questions and answer bank, instructions, roster etc.)? How can I get a backup of my course?

Course data and designs can be accessed as the system currently allows until May 12th. A database backup of ISU-related data will be provided to ISU as part of the shutdown process. Additional or custom requests for data should be directed to the authorized representative in charge of the backup. CELT is in the process of identifying and designating the authorized ISU representative to receive the data dump on May 12th. We will be in touch with all users and provide more information when this aspect of data management is sorted out.

# OpenTBL sun-setting: Questions and Support

## **6. How will it impact the research that I am doing with the student data?**

Score exportation can be accessed through the system until May 12th. A database backup of ISU-related data will be provided to ISU as part of the shutdown process. Additional or custom requests for data should be directed to the authorized representative in charge of the backup. CELT is in the process of identifying and designating the authorized ISU representative to receive the data dump on May 12th. We will be in touch with all users and provide more information when this aspect of data management is sorted out.

## **7. What about the students? Will students be able to access their exercises after the sun-setting?**

Students have until May 12th to access their exercises through the live system. They will no longer be able to access it after that.

## **8. What about student privacy? What will happen to all their scores, comments and private information stored in the cloud?**

The OpenTBL database will be deleted from the cloud provider as part of the shutdown process on May 12th. An authorized representative at ISU will receive a database backup of ISU-related data as part of the shutdown. The backup will be in `pgdump` (PostgreSQL format), fully identified, and provided as-is. CELT is making arrangements for securing the student data received from OpenTBL.

## **9. Hey, wait a minute – we heard that OpenTBL is Open Source. Does it mean that my department or college could host it?**

Yes indeed, OpenTBL is open source. If you or your college IT personnel are interested, the source code is available under the MIT license on GitHub at <https://github.com/sixthedge/cellar>.

However, Sixth Edge is unable to support any transitory or setup efforts at this time.

## **10. What are my options for conducting online TBL now?**

ThinkSpace currently has the tools to conduct peer evaluations and has been used successfully by ISU faculty before the advent of OpenTBL and can serve as an immediate alternative. ThinkSpace also supports problem solving, case-based application, and writing exercises in a blended environment.

# OpenTBL sun-setting: Questions and Support

Additionally, the CELT ThinkSpace program coordinator Kajal Madeka is actively testing out several other technology platforms such as Teammates, InteDashboard, LAMS, Peerceptive to name a few. She is also exploring the capabilities of Canvas for supporting Team Based Learning. An informational meeting will be held soon after Spring Break to go over her impressions of the tools and their capabilities and this will also form a topic for discussion during ThinkSpace Learning Community meetings, allowing for plenty of discussion, feedback and troubleshooting.

**This is where you can help!** We want to hear the community's voice for deciding our technology options that work best in ISU related use cases. It would be tremendously helpful if you would be willing to pilot on any of the tools being explored over the summer. A poll will be sent out after the informational meeting – please do sign up – or contact [ksmadeka@iastate.edu](mailto:ksmadeka@iastate.edu) now with your intent to participate!

## **11. Will there be training provided by CELT to help me transition to the new tool(s), including on the TBL capabilities of Canvas?**

Yes, once we have decided on the tool(s), the CELT team will organize training workshops for faculty as well as College coordinators to ensure that you are well supported in the adoption of the new tool(s).

## **12. What else is CELT doing to find a solution? How can I help?**

Dr. Holly Bender, CELT Associate Director is working tirelessly, talking to campus leaders, administrators and faculty to find a long-term solution. Some very promising leads have been posed and are being pursued but it is too early in the process and will likely take some time to before it takes tangible shape.

Meanwhile, as some leading TBL faculty have expressed,

*"This is Iowa State University of Science and Technology! I am sure we can get together and find a solution!"*

We need the help of our Faculty and Instructional Design and Support community to move forward to achieve a positive outcome. You can help be part of the solution by piloting a technology in your class or writing letters of support when it comes to that or sharing your ideas with us. Please email Holly Bender ([hbender@iastate.edu](mailto:hbender@iastate.edu)) and/or Kajal Madeka ([ksmadeka@iastate.edu](mailto:ksmadeka@iastate.edu)) if you have an idea and would like to be part of the solution.

**Thank you for your enduring support!**